ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

An Ethernet Metropolitan Area Network (10) provides connectivity to one or more customer premises (16_1, 16_2, 16_3) to packet-bases services, such as ATM, Frame

5   Relay, or IP while advantageously providing a mechanism for assuring security and regulation of customer traffic. Upon receipt of each customer-generated information frame (20), an ingress Multi-Service Platform (MSP) (12_2) "tags" the frame with a customer descriptor (22') that specifically identifies the recipient customer. In practice, the MSP tags each frame by overwriting the Virtual Local Area Network (VLAN)

10   identifier (22) with the routing descriptor. Using the customer descriptor in each frame, a recipient Provider Edge Router (PER) (18) or ATM switch can map the information as appropriate to direct the information to the specific customer. In addition, the customer descriptor (22') may also include Quality of Service (QoS) allowing the recipient Provider Edge Router (PER) (18) or ATM switch to vary the QoS level accordingly.